

REMARKS

In response to the May 5, 2004 Official Action, the claims have been amended to more clearly define various of the critical features of the instant invention and to more clearly distinguish the invention from the prior art.

Claim 1 and therefor the claims dependent therefrom have been amended to specify that propylene oxide process relates to the reaction of propylene, oxygen and hydrogen (specification page 1, line 33 – page 2, line 1), that a noble metal on titanium solid catalyst is employed (specification page 3, line 24) and that the removed reaction mixture is flashed to separate lower boiling components including propylene oxide as vapor with recycle of catalyst and solvent slurry to the oxidation zone (specification page 6, line 28 – page 7, line 2).

The claims have been rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as unpatentable over Dessau et al and Lindner et al. Reconsideration of this rejection as it may apply to the presently amended claims is respectfully requested.

The Dessau et al citation is acknowledged at page 2 of the specification as showing the production of propylene oxide by reaction of propylene, oxygen and hydrogen. However, the reference does not teach certain elements which are critical to the process of the present invention.

Specifically, Dessau et al does not show the continuous process claimed herein with the use of catalyst slurried in high boiling solvent, continuous removal of a reaction mixture stream, flashing the removed stream to separate lights

including propylene oxide from catalyst and solvent slurry with recycle of the resulting catalyst and solvent slurry to the oxidation.

Thus it can be seen that Dessau et al cannot be considered anticipatory of the present invention since the reference does not address or fairly suggest essential elements which are critical to the process herein claimed.

The Lindner et al multi-step process is likewise not thought to represent an anticipation of the present claimed process. Like Dessau et al above discussed Lindner et al does not show reaction mixture removal, flashing of propylene oxide containing lights and recycle of catalyst and solvent slurry back to the oxidation.

Lindner et al is concerned with a procedure wherein oxygen is added at a plurality of points in the overall sequence. The procedure of Lindner et al does not involve flashing the reaction mixture slurry to separate propylene oxide containing lights from a solvent and catalyst slurry with recycle of the slurry.

Applicant respectfully submits that neither of the cited references teaches the critical and essential features of the process herein claimed. Applicant's process uses a high boiling solvent and integrates the high boiling solvent use with flash separation of product propylene oxide and recycle of solvent and solid catalyst.

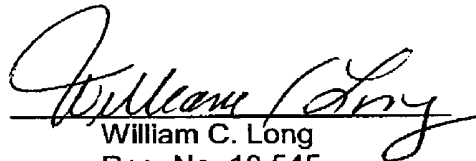
It is respectfully submitted that the references do not show or suggest the claimed process. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection on the cited art is respectfully requested.

The number of claims remains the same and no new independent claims have been added. Accordingly it is believed that no additional fees are owed at

this time. Should this be incorrect, authority is given to charge any deficient amount to Deposit Account No. 12-2138.

Allowance of the case is requested.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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